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**ABSTRACT**

Testimony given before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education regarding the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act (H.R. 3263) is presented. This legislation targets federal assistance to support state and local programs for gifted and talented students in the areas of personnel development, model programs, technical assistance, and research. Testimony was provided by the following individuals and organizations: Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education; Mario Biaggi (Congressional Representative); Council for Exceptional Children; Association for the Gifted; James J. Gallagher (professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); Gifted Child Society, Inc.; Program in Gifted Education (University of Utah); Gifted and Talented Unit, New York City Board of Education; Nick J. Rahall, II (Congressional Representative); and Altamae Whitehill, the Coordinator of Gifted Programs, Cheney Public Schools, Washington. (CB)

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# GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY,  
AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

**H.R. 3263 and H.R. 2364**

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 6, 1986

Serial No. 99-142

Printed for the use of the Committee on Education and Labor



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## GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1986

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY  
AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION,  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:50 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Augustus Hawkins (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members Present: Representative Hawkins.

Also present: Representative Biaggi.

Staff present: John J. Jennings, counsel; Nancy L. Kober, legislative analyst; Beverly M. Griffin, staff assistant; and Andrew Hartman, legislative associate.

Chairman HAWKINS. This is the hearing on H.R. 3263, Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Act.

The Chair will call on Mr. Biaggi to present his bill, H.R. 3263.

May the Chair also ask at this time in the interim that Dr. Yvette Jackson, coordinator, gifted and talented, New York City Board of Education; and George Fichter, chairperson, Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education, Ohio State University, to be seated at the witness table.

Mr. Biaggi.

Mr. BIAGGI. Mr. Chairman, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this subcommittee today as we begin to consider H.R. 3263, the Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act. This legislation targets Federal assistance to support the State and local programs for gifted and talented students. I have a longer prepared statement which I would like submitted for the record. I do wish to make several points at this time.

First, Mr. Chairman, let me commend you for scheduling this hearing in such an expeditious fashion. I also want to note I am joined in this effort by 82 of my colleagues, including a majority of the members of both the subcommittee and the full Committee on Education and Labor. They believe as I do that the Federal Government has a responsibility to ensure that the best and brightest of our Nation's students are adequately, effectively, and specifically served by our educational system.

Gifted and talented children face many problems as schools fail to address their special needs and provide the attention and resources these students need in order to fulfill their potential. We

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must dispel the myth that a gifted child will do fine on his own without the nurturing and attention received by other students. After all, we do not ask any other child in our entire school population to make it on their own in the educational system. Why do we continue to expect this of a gifted child.

Until 1981 the Federal Government provided for gifted and talented programs under the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act, enacted in 1978. Until its demise, this program annually provided \$6 million for these educational efforts. However, today the programs for the gifted and talented can be operated by States through the chapter 2 education block grant which also funds 29 other programs. But as a senior member of this committee I sense the destruction of many programs as a result of this method. I have always been opposed to this method of funding because it is clear the majority of the programs suffer from acute neglect when lumped together in one sole funding source. The inadequacy of our present Federal policy with respect to gifted and talented education is a result of the block grant. Consider, for example, only 13 percent of the school districts currently receiving funds under chapter 2 allocated any money at all for gifted education. Consider that there are only 56 full-time gifted and talented consultants employed by the State educational agencies, 56 people to serve an estimated 2½ million of our most promising students. At this time, we spend approximately \$5 per child in Federal funds to support the best and brightest of our students and are unable to serve an additional 1½ million more in our system.

When support of the gifted and talented education resulted in Federal appropriations for such programs in the 1970's we observed a dramatic rise in services and activities for the gifted at the State and local level. My bill, H.R. 3263, also provides a modest approach to promote quality in the classroom. This legislation has three key provisions which provide national leadership in the area of gifted and talented programs. These provisions are: One, to authorize \$10 million in fiscal year 1987 and such sums as necessary to support programs at the State and local level designed to meet educational needs of gifted and talented children; preservice and inservice training of professional development opportunities for teachers; and to establish a National Center for Research and Development in the Education of Gifted and Talented. The purpose of this Center is to stimulate high-quality research that will assist in identifying and serving gifted students in innovative ways.

We are in an era of budget tightening and budget constraints. Yet I maintain we must distinguish between expenditures and investments. I say that every dollar we invest in a gifted and talented child will provide a return of a stronger future for our Nation. We as a society desperately need the contribution of these children. A Federal presence and involvement such as H.R. 3263 will establish gifted and talented as a national priority. It could build a reservoir of intellectual and creative talent that would assure growth and fulfillment of individuals and of the United States.

I have served in this distinguished committee since I was first elected to Congress. During this time I believe we have always worked under one basic premise: "Education is the very foundation upon which we build a quality future—the future of an individual

and, more importantly, the future of this great Nation." Clearly that premise is at the very core of what we will be discussing today, a quality education for our best and brightest.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HAWKINS. Thank you, Mr. Biaggi. We certainly want to commend you for this legislative proposal and the work you have done in connection with it.

[Prepared statement of Hon. Mario Biaggi follows:]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARIO BIAGGI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM  
THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman, I deeply appreciate the opportunity that you afford me today to testify on behalf of H.R. 3263, The Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act. I also wish to thank you for the expeditious manner in which you agreed to my request for a hearing on this vital education issue.

The Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education is a measure which I am proud to note enjoys the strong, bi-partisan support of 82 House members -- including the majority of Members who serve on this Subcommittee and the full Committee on Education and Labor. My colleagues have joined me in this effort for they believe, as I do, that the Federal government has a responsibility to ensure that the best and brightest of our nation's students are adequately, effectively, and specifically served by our educational system.

Perhaps the need for gifted and talented programming was best highlighted in an article which recently appeared in The Houston Post. "In the last decade or so, America has developed a consciousness about the environment, with scores of organized groups worrying about pollution, toxic waste, acid rain, endangered species, and the waste of natural resources. Yet one precious natural resource, in limited quantity and vital to the nation's future, is largely ignored, and few seem concerned about it's tragic waste. The resource is the supply of gifted children, in whose tiny noggins much of the future of this, or any other nation, is locked up."

This is certainly an apt description of the plight of our nation's estimated 2.5 million gifted and talented students. They face special barriers to a quality education, barriers which unfortunately, are often overlooked by this nation's educational policymakers. To address this area of special education, I have introduced H.R. 3263.

This legislation will target Federal assistance to support local and state-wide programs that address the unique and pressing needs of gifted and talented children and youth. It is certainly legislation that is long overdue. A report issued in 1983, "A Nation At Risk", by the National Commission on Excellence in Education noted, "Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school" and that "Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement in the Scholastic Aptitude Test have also dramatically declined." One clear recommendation emerged: "The Federal government, in cooperation with States and localities, should help meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented."

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Gifted and talented children are identified as intellectually advanced, creative -- children who possess the ability to think critically and those who have a great curiosity. They have been described as our nation's "lost treasure", "untapped resource", and "link to the future." It is tremendously important to our entire society that these creative and intellectual talents be identified, developed, and utilized. The future of this nation -- and that of the world -- depends upon the quality of the creative imagination of our next generation.

Gifted and talented children face many problems as schools fail to address their special needs and provide the attention and resources these children need to fulfill their potential. As with all children, gifted students need nurtured and tended, in order for them to grow. It is imperative that we dispel the myth that a gifted child will do fine on their own without the nurturing and attention received by other students. We do not ask any other child in our entire school population to make it on their own in the educational system. Why do we continue to expect this of the gifted child?

Proposals for the provision of special education opportunities to our most promising children have long been on the educational agenda in this country. Originating, perhaps, in Thomas Jefferson's proposal for an educational system that would "rake out those rare occurrences of individual genius", incorporated into the canon of professional educators' concerns as early as 1920 with the appearance of the National Society for the Study of Education's Yearbook on Gifted and Talented Education, and reaching national concern with the launching of the Sputnik and the threat of foreign dominance in 1957, gifted and talented programming has witnessed both support and neglect during our nation's history. Unfortunately, however, it is clear that this country has yet to fully address the needs of our gifted and talented schoolchildren.

The Federal government, until 1981, had provided for gifted and talented programs since 1978 under the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act, authored by my distinguished former colleague from New York, Senator Jacob Javits. Until its demise, this program annually provided \$6 million for these educational efforts. Today, programs for the gifted and talented can be operated by States through the education block grant, funding this and 29 other programs. But it is clear that under this method, gifted and talented programming is suffering from acute educational neglect.

Consider for example, some of the following statistics which dramatically illustrate the inadequacy of our present federal policy with respect to gifted and talented education.

--- Only 13 per cent of school districts currently receiving funds under Chapter 2 allocated any money at all for gifted education.

--- Of these districts, they spend an average of only \$1,000 on this special education.

-- There are only 56 full-time Gifted and Talented Consultants employed by State Education Agencies across the entire nation. Fifty-six people to serve full-time 2.5 million of this nation's most promising students.

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--- Only 23 States have mandated programs of some sort for gifted children.

--- Thirty-six States require no certification or special coursework of any kind for teachers of gifted and talented children.

--- It is estimated that a large number of high school drop-outs, a problem reaching epidemic proportions in this country, are gifted children who were not properly identified and nurtured in school.

--- At this time, we spend approximately \$5 per child in federal funds to support the best and brightest of our students.

--- Just over one million students are currently being served. I have pointed out that they are receiving much less money. In addition, we are unable to serve an estimated 1.5 million of these children and youth.

We must provide a national program to specifically serve these particular students in need. If there is to be a reasonable response to promote quality in the classroom, we must adopt H.R. 3263.

Under this legislation, \$10 million will be authorized for FY 1987 and "such sum" as necessary to support programs at the State and local level that are designed to meet the educational needs of gifted and talented children and youth. Eligible recipients of this funding include State educational agencies, local educational agencies, schools of higher education, and other public and private organizations. Programs and projects to develop or improve the capability of schools with respect to identification and education of gifted and talented schoolchildren is a major priority of this bill.

In addition, pre-service and in-service training and professional development opportunities for teachers is also provided for under this legislation. If we are to continue our crusade for excellence in the classroom, then we must provide our nation's teachers with the training, the tools, and the resources essential to any quality gifted and talented program.

And finally, H.R. 3263 establishes a National Center for Research and Development in the education of gifted and talented youth. The purpose of this Center is to stimulate high-quality research that will assist in identifying and serving gifted students in innovative ways. This Center will provide the national leadership and support needed to develop the special abilities and ensure the special potential of these students for assisting our nation so they will not be lost.

I am proud of my membership on the Education and Labor Committee as we have worked throughout the years to assure that our nation's 4 million handicapped students are granted equal educational opportunity. As a result, we have witnessed the passage of P.L. 94-142, the Education For All Handicapped Children Act. Yet, special education must also recognize that children with "special needs" include not only our nation's handicapped students, but those estimated 2.5 million children who need encouragement, support, and special programs to assure that they are provided the kinds of educational opportunities which will encourage -- not discourage -- our best and brightest students.

This bill enjoys the support of 14 major national organizations involved with the education of gifted children and youth. It is both timely as well as essential that we act to avert an increased crisis in our schools that is slowly reaching alarming proportions. This crisis results in our most promising students being unserved, underserved, or incorrectly served by our existing educational programs.

A Congressionally mandated study of the education of the gifted and talented in the United States in 1972 spoke of "an enormous individual and social loss when talent among the nation's children and youth goes undiscovered and undeveloped." Despite a great deal of constructive activity in the field of gifted education since the early 1970's, the loss associated with undeveloped talent continues through neglect. The possibility that these programs might continually transform and invigorate our culture and economy by producing a steady supply of Mark Twains, Marie Curies, or Thomas Edisons, makes them now more attractive than ever.

In the Administration's FY 1987 budget, Secretary Bennett, when discussing major program initiatives, clearly recognizes "the importance of programs for gifted and talented" and explained, "Emphasis is placed on improving the quality of education at all levels." However, he also discussed the major federal cutbacks proposed for education by saying, "Difficult choices had to be made and priorities had to be set." Through my experience here on this Committee, I know better than anyone the difficult choice one must face with respect to the budget and education. Yet, if we are truly committed to the quality of education at all levels, we must address the needs of gifted and talented students.

In this era of budget tightening and budget constraints, many educational policymakers overlook these students because they believe such gifted and talented children simply do not need any special additional resources, or we can not afford further federal assistance. Simply stated, this is not the case, as has been well-documented throughout this hearing this morning. How can our Nation afford NOT to pay?

Gifted and talented children and youth are a population that is alive and well in the United States. But cutbacks in federal funding, phasing out of the U.S. Office of the Gifted and Talented, local school budget crunches, and the economic malaise of the 1980's has dimmed the rosy future of gifted and talented education, and those students who need to be served. Today, I believe there are stronger reasons than ever for giving a fair chance to creative gifted children and adults. We are living in an age of increasing rates of change, depleted natural resources, interdependence, and destandardization. H.R. 3263 can become a vehicle for finding and nurturing these "national treasures" and giving them the support they must have in order to give society those contributions it so desperately needs.

There are a lot of kids suffering because we do not know how, or even more tragic, we do not make, the effort to accommodate specialized minds early in life. And often, it is too late to reward them later. H.R. 3263, The Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act, provides a modest

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approach for addressing a national concern. Let us never forget we are seeking to assist our potential future leaders in science, industry, education and politics. This is a matter that can not be left to chance. A federal presence and involvement would establish gifted and talented education as a national priority. It could build the reservoir of intellectual and creative talent that would assure growth and fulfillment of individuals and of the United States.

I have served on this distinguished Committee since I was first elected to Congress in 1968. During this time, I believe we have always worked under one basic premise: "Education is the very foundation upon which we build a quality future -- the future of an individual and more importantly, the future of this great Nation." Certainly, that premise is at the very core of what we are discussing here today. A quality education for our best and most promising students.

As H.G. Wells once observed, "History is a race between education and catastrophe." To me, this is no contest. By providing support for gifted and talented education, we will insure that our best and brightest are clearly ahead in this race.

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Chairman HAWKINS. The witness seated at the witness table is Mr. George Fichter who is the next person to be presented. He is chairperson of the Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education, Ohio State University.

Mr. Fichter, we welcome you and look forward to your testimony. The testimony in its entirety will be printed in the record, and you may deal with it as you so see fit.

**STATEMENT OF GEORGE FICHTER, CHAIRPERSON, COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIFTED EDUCATION, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Mr. FICHTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And we appreciate Mr. Biaggi's support and his presentation of this legislation so that we can have an opportunity to speak to it. Thank you very much, sir.

As a person who has been working for some years in the business of the education of gifted children, I was disappointed some years ago when we lost our national presence in such education. Many of the statements that you have from the members of the coalition, and there are 14 members, will speak to that issue and will give an overall framework, I believe, for the support of new Federal legislation to support our new national presence.

Some of the special points that they have made I believe are critical to bring to you. We have a missing link right now, I believe, between the teacher and the student and that is the amount of training that sometimes the teachers are able to have. We need to include more work at your universities, we need to include much more in the area of research at our universities so that the teachers can be better trained to reach many more of these 2½ million children that we see needing the special help beyond the regular curriculum.

Back in 1981 when we did lose our national presence, a number of us came together in the United States who had an abiding interest in the education of gifted children and formed the coalition. We started out with 12 groups. We are now up to 14. We represent many thousands of people. I believe the important thing there that happened was that we communicated between one another on an equal basis at that point, suggesting that we all need the very same thing. We need that strong presence to allow us to have someone at the national level or some person at the national level to center, as Mr. Biaggi described, to be that mechanism that would disseminate Federal funds, to allow for the change in research, the increase in research that we need.

Why do we need the help from the national level? Well, we have a number of dropouts. We find across the country in all schools, regardless of State, many of these youngsters have potential to work way beyond their capacity and do not stay in school long enough to develop all that potential. We have a lot of underachievers, children who have great abilities but do not always do all the things they ought to be able to do at the school. We have a number of examples, I believe, that we can show from State to State.

One of our problems is the disparity in the number of programs and the quality of programs allowable from State to State. We

have the difficulty in geography, in local philosophy, and, of course, in local resources. Some States are able to provide some money, but we provided only \$384 million of State and local funds in the past 10 years. That is all for gifted children and that is only about \$150 per child. We find that to be not enough to have done all the kinds of progress and information sharing that we felt we needed across this country.

The teacher training, as I say, is probably something that has been brought forth in many reports, and one of them lately, the Richardson study done in the State of Texas, has clearly pointed out that we do need many changes in our local programs. Gifted children are gifted 24 hours a day, and we quite often provide service to them no more than 1 or 2 hours a week in a special way beyond that regular curriculum.

I believe when we look back in the history of the legislation that had been provided to us and the dollars that came with it back in the early 1970's, we find a tremendous change occurred across this country, and I want to take just a moment to remember that. In 1972, after the Marlin report, it became evident to all of us that we needed to do something and with the small amount of dollars that came from the Federal Government there was established the National State Leadership Training Institute for Gifted and Talented based in California, and that was a Federal grant that went to a school district. By the wisdom of someone that money was generated into leadership training at the State level. At that time only 10 State consultants like me were in existence in this country, leading at a State level and trying to provide some local efforts from the State leadership.

Now, when we had these leadership training institutes and the ones that took place in 1972, 1973, 1974, and 1975, we wound up with 65 people after 1975 who were full time at the State level. Going back to my own State of Ohio, we had at that time no State funding for gifted education, in 1974. We had no full-time State consultant. We had no standards and we had no specific law relating to that program. When we finished with our program out in Denver, where we had come together with 44 other States, we had a State plan and all of this was developed by those dollars that were generated by the Federal legislation.

When we came back to Ohio, the State legislature looked at our State plan and said we now have a solid plan to provide a rule. They allocated some dollars to us, and we in turn used those dollars to grow from nothing into a \$10 million program in Ohio alone. It is not enough. It does not take us all the way, but it did get us going and we are looking again now not for a reinstitution of the same program but looking at Mr. Biaggi's bill. We would ask for the committee to consider presenting this bill and providing us with the presence that is needed at a national level that will be attended by the very few Federal dollars that will allow us to have a National Center for Research in the Education of Gifted Children.

[Prepared statement of George Fichter follows:]

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COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIFTED EDUCATION

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The Ohio State University  
Department of Human Services  
1945 North High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43210

April 28, 1986

The Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-346C Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

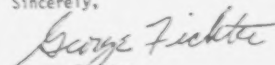
Dear Mr. Hawkins:

In response to your letter of April 21, 1986, inviting me to testify on H.R. 3263 and H.R. 2364 on May 6, 1986, I am honored to accept your invitation on behalf of the fourteen member groups of the Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education.

In accordance with your request, 50 copies of my prepared statement are enclosed.

Thank you for providing this hearing on bills which are vital to America's future.

Sincerely,

  
George Fichter  
Chairperson  
CAGE

GF/rsn  
Enclosures

(614) 466-2650

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**COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIFTED EDUCATION**


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A UNIFIED VOICE FOR THE GIFTED • Education • Legislation • Communication

Statement of:  
 George Fichter, Chairperson  
 Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education  
 on behalf of H.R. 3263 before the  
 Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education  
 Committee on Education and Labor  
 U.S. House of Representatives

May 6, 1986

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is George Fichter. I am the Educational Consultant, Programs for Gifted with the Ohio Department of Education, and Adjunct Professor of Education at The Ohio State University. I am appearing here today on behalf of fourteen national organizations comprising the Coalition for the Advancement of Gifted Education. A copy of the CAGE membership is attached. I speak in support and urge swift enactment of H.R. 3263, the "Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act of 1985," introduced by Representative Mario Biaggi on September 11, 1985. The bill now has over 75 cosponsors, including members of both political parties who represent Americans from coast to coast.

Abraham Lincoln told us that "A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting and when you are gone attend to those things which you think are important. He will assume control of your cities, states and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations. The fate of humanity is in his hands." To meet this challenge, I believe most of us would agree that all of our children should receive the best training available, and that education must be appropriate for each of them as they aim for their individual potentials and destinies.

There are an estimated 2.5 million gifted and talented children in this country who have the capacity to reach beyond the regular curriculum available to them in their respective schools. The manifest societal need for large numbers of highly competent students, in order to participate effectively in a complex technological society, is increasingly recognized. The design of programs for gifted and talented students reflects both those technological needs and the desire to produce individuals with an understanding of their cultural heritage, greater insight into themselves, and a keen sense of awareness of the society in which they live. Mr. Biaggi noted in his address to Congress when introducing H.R. 3263, that the Federal Government provided a modest program for gifted and talented children until 1981 when it was deleted. Today, federal support for these children exists only through small block grants known as Chapter Two. And now he very clearly reminds us that "... there remains no national program to specifically serve these students' needs."

In light of the many national reports in recent years concerning the quality of education in America (for example, "A Nation at Risk" which mentions seven times the need for educating gifted children) it is no longer an issue whether we will provide improved educational opportunities for our gifted and talented children. Rather, it is now a matter of who supports this increased effort. We know that state and local education agencies and many universities and colleges have made extraordinary strides in recent years to get this job done. We provide special classes, seminars, mentorships, advanced placement, and combinations of these services now. Our needs, however, include teacher training and researching of the dynamic trends in education nationwide. We also have the load of many other priorities, consequently services to gifted students vary widely among the States. That effort depends largely upon local resources, philosophies, and geography. Because of this, support for human services including education, must be a shared responsibility of all Americans at all governmental levels and in all sectors of the community.

The re-establishment of a national presence in the business of supporting our best and brightest students has therefore become an imperative. We dare not be complacent and fall into the trap of letting someone else do it. It has been said that "An old error is always more popular than a new truth." We cannot forget that we must move forward, however unpopular, and understand the reality of being responsive to the needs of two million students who need encouragement, support, and the special opportunities that will be the legacy of the establishment of a National Center for Research and Development of the Education of Gifted and Talented Children and Youth. This is what Mr. Biaggi proposes to do.

We know that research opportunities provide us with tried and tested new information. We need to bring this research, which rightly should begin and flourish in the university, out into the marketplace of education: our elementary and secondary schools. We know that special teachers need special training and the information generated by that research. We know that model programs which examine new methodology with careful evaluation will provide us with real change in our efforts to support millions of gifted children. This legislation will allow us to do these things in a comprehensive way through the National Center.

Make no mistake. We are proud of our many programs currently in effect in each state. But we cannot now provide on a national level the special leadership needed - that elusive ingredient that only attends a federal presence. Federal sanction generates a national camaraderie that grows through wide understanding of a given issue.

All of us, however, who are working for enactment of H.R. 3263, recognize that we are requesting a new authorization for appropriations, however modest, at a time when Gramm-Rudman-Hollings will force some cutbacks in federal expenditures for existing education programs. We know that this raises the question of whether a new authorization, even 10 million dollars, would not dilute support for programs already authorized, and we feel that we must confront this issue head-on.

The FY 1986 appropriations for all Department of Education programs within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Education and Labor exceeded 18 billion dollars, and those within the jurisdiction of this subcommittee exceeded 6 billion dollars. The full first year authorization of Mr. Biaggi's bill represents only \$5 of every \$10,000 of the larger sum, and only \$16 of every \$10,000 of the smaller sum. That is an almost infinitesimal portion of federal education expenditures. All we are asking is that the Congress itself have an opportunity to consider whether the special educational needs of our most gifted children and youth merit consideration for this small, but important expenditure. Because the Congress itself cannot appropriate funds in the absence of an authorizing act, we are asking that they be permitted to consider the needs of gifted and talented children and youth within the narrow but vital purposes set forth in this bill.

We are confident that this subcommittee and the full committee will act to move this bill to the House floor. Over half the Members of both the full committee and this subcommittee have joined Mr. Biaggi in sponsoring H.R. 3263. On behalf of several million American school children whom this legislation would help achieve their full educational potential, we thank you for that support, and for implicitly taking the position that their special needs deserve consideration even in a time of budgetary constraints.

We are at a special moment of opportunity and we can catch the good that is within our reach. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the need for special educational opportunities for these children - the very people who are going to take over our roles and lead us into the future.

Chairman HAWKINS. Thank you, Mr. Fichter.

Any questions?

Is Dr. Jackson present? I assume Dr. Jackson is not.

Mr. BIAGGI. One of the witnesses is not here. I would ask permission for her statement to be inserted in the record.

Chairman HAWKINS. Without objection, the record will be kept open for the additional testimony which may be handed in after the hearing this morning.

[Prepared statement of Yvette Jackson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF YVETTE JACKSON, ED.D., DIRECTOR, GIFTED & TALENTED  
UNIT, NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

To define gifted and talented as "being the ability to give evidence of high performance in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields" is an understatement, for the implications of giftedness are even greater than that.

If we were to list people we considered truly "gifted", alive or dead, who would some of the people be? Leonardo DaVinci? Paul Robeson? Woody Allen? The individuals we generally consider as gifted are those individuals who have used their talents to make productive contributions. In other words, giftedness is the demonstration of high abilities as evidenced in productive endeavor/s and contributions. Therefore, when we classify certain children as having the ability to be "national resources vital to the future of the Nation" as stated in H.R. 3263 and H.R. 2364, we are in fact referring to those children who are potentially gifted and talented and who when offered appropriate educational opportunities will be able "to solve critical national problems in areas of national concern" and/or make contributions in the areas of the arts, the sciences, technology and education.

The issue we must then address is who are these potentially gifted students and how can we identify them?

Many people have adopted the definition that gifted students are those students who score in the top 3 - 5 percent on standardized tests. This definition is erroneous for three major reasons:

1. There is no empirical evidence which has indicated that productive individuals come only from this percentile range. The 3 - 5 percent designation was originally given as a means of narrowing the allocation of funds granted for gifted programs;
2. Empirical research which has been done by Dr. Joseph Renzulli of the University of Connecticut and other psychologists and educators has indicated that many of the most gifted contributors have come from ranges as low as the 20th percentile on standardized tests;
3. Most importantly, standardized tests have been proven to only differentiate students who do well on particular content material only. "Success on these tests depends on a student's exposure to particular pieces of knowledge, information, habits, and approaches which compose those tests". (Larry P.v. Riles).<sup>1</sup>

Given these findings, it is obvious that standardized tests are not reliable indicators of a student's potential productiveness. Unfortunately, this circumstance directly affects students from economically disadvantaged families and areas, for they are faced with environmental conditions which limit the type of learning experiences which are assessed on standardized tests. As a result, many potentially gifted students go unrecognized.

<sup>1</sup> Larry P.v. Riles, 495 F Supp. 926 (N.D. Calif, 1979).

In light of these facts it is apparent that the identification of potential giftedness in all children (disadvantaged or not) requires procedures which recognize those characteristics indicative of productive behaviors.

Studies carried out by Dr. Joseph Renzulli of gifted productive individuals have found three common characteristics to exist. These characteristics include above average ability in an area of concentration, creativity and task commitment in the pursuit or exploration of an area of interest. These characteristics can be identified and nurtured by offering students opportunities which expose students to experiences which stimulate creativity, encourage interest, and which offer students strategies, skills and opportunities to explore and demonstrate their abilities.

New York City is composed of diverse student populations. In order to design an optimum delivery of opportunities to nurture the potentially gifted students in the city, the Gifted and Talented Unit of the Board of Education's Division of Curriculum and Instruction has coordinated a Citywide Gifted Programs Framework.

The Citywide Gifted Programs Framework reflects a major effort by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction of the New York City Board of Education to develop an instructional design which recognizes that there are potentially gifted students in every public school. The framework design offers a total program which modifies the regular curriculum to address individual needs in the classroom while organizing out-of-class enrichment experiences and opportunities for individual pursuits. The aim of this program design is to develop qualitatively differentiated programs which focus on self-directed advanced level learning, critical, creative, and productive thinking strategies and the application of these learning and thinking strategies to a variety of academic and creative endeavors.

The Citywide Gifted Framework adheres to the philosophy of the Enrichment Triad Model. The Enrichment Triad Model is structured into three components of enrichment activities which are as follows:

Type I Enrichment Activities consist of activities designed to bring the learner in touch with a topic, area of study, and first hand learning experiences. When utilized to engage student interest through Type I exposure, students have the opportunity to learn about new topics and ideas, which lead to further study and investigation.

Type II Enrichment Activities are those instructional techniques, materials, and methods which engage the learner into higher level thinking and processing skills. These processes include skills such as problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, divergent thinking, and creative thinking. Type II Enrichment allows students to expand and develop their thinking processes to the highest level.

Type III Enrichment Activities provide students with the opportunity to utilize and expand the knowledge and experience gained in Type I and Type II activities. Utilizing their new fund of knowledge, students can investigate, research, and develop a problem or topic using appropriate methods of inquiry. Type III activities engage students in individual or small group projects where students become the authors and originators of new ideas, products and activities.

In order to increase opportunities for student exposure to enriching experiences, the Cultural Institution NETWORK has been developed as a component of the Citywide Gifted Programs Framework. The Cultural Institution NETWORK facilitates exposure to the educational opportunities offered by the numerous programs, resources, and services of cultural institutions and organizations in New York City.

The goal of the Citywide Gifted Programs Framework is to improve the identification of student potential and to organize the differentiation of experiences for nurturing gifted behaviors for all students. This can be achieved through the coordination of gifted programs in every public school.

Research has proven that the development and demonstration of giftedness depends greatly on the intellectual, academic, cultural and social experiences which a child is afforded. The problem New York City and many districts have faced in the coordination of programs which nurture such behaviors and meet the needs of their varied populations has been insufficient funds for staff development and program support. This problem is best illustrated in surveys which indicate a great disparity in the services offered to gifted students.

Resources made available for gifted students vary. Districts with the greatest diversity of student population and needs have to make programmatic decisions which often result in funding programs other than enrichment programs for the potentially gifted. In order to address the needs of the potentially gifted throughout the country in an equitable fashion, a comprehensive plan for categorical funding for gifted education is needed.

Bills H.R. 3263 and H.R. 2364 would make such funding available and would help insure the coordination of those strategies necessary for the development of appropriate opportunities. These include:

- ~ stimulation of research and development in the area of gifted education;
- ~ preservice and inservice training for teachers;
- ~ establishment of model projects and exemplary programs;
- ~ improved programs for identifying and nurturing gifted behaviors.

Potentially gifted students are capable of making productive contributions to our Nation. They are the best investment our Nation can make. With appropriate educational opportunities, the return on our investment will help us to realize the greatness our Nation is capable of. We can all benefit from such an investment.

Chairman HAWKINS. Mr. Biaggi, do you have any questions?

Mr. BIAGGI. Mr. Fichter, in the report, "A Nation at Risk," by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, it states that "Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school" and "Both the number and proportion of students demonstrating superior achievement in the Scholastic Aptitude Test have also dramatically declined."

One clear recommendation emerged: "The Federal Government, in cooperation with States and localities, should help meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented."

But that is consistent with your comments. In addition to your own observations, it is important to note that this report, "A Nation at Risk," kind of stimulated the Nation's thinking about what was happening to the whole educational area and a couple of areas which this report focused on was the absence of math and science teachers and clearly the gifted and talented.

So your testimony is welcome to simply reinforce or echo what the national commission's recommendation was. I thank you for your comments.

No further comments, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HAWKINS. If there are no further witnesses, Mr. Fichter, we certainly want to express appreciation for your remarks and you certainly expressed yourself effectively with respect to the pending proposal.

This, like the other resolution before the committee this morning, will be included at an early date of the subcommittee, and I am sure that Mr. Biaggi in his usual capable way will bring it to the Chair's attention and expedite it to the extent possible. We thank you.

Mr. BIAGGI. I might add, Mr. Chairman, although it is included in my full statement, I think it is proper to make note of the fact that the late Senator Jacob Javits, a respected Member of Congress and very personal friend of mine, was the original author of this bill in 1978 and its demise clearly has been to the disadvantage of a great potential resource that is just waiting to be developed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HAWKINS. Thank you, Mr. Fichter.

Mr. FICHTER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman HAWKINS. That concludes the hearing this morning on two resolutions before the committee. The full committee will be meeting at 10:30, and we stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:07 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for inclusion in the record:]

Statement of  
The Council for Exceptional Children  
and  
The Association for the Gifted  
to the  
Subcommittee on Elementary Secondary and Vocational Education  
Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
with respect to  
The Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Act of 1985  
H.R. 3263  
May 6, 1986

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Council for Exceptional Children and The Association for the Gifted are pleased to have this opportunity to submit the following statement of support for H.R. 3263, the Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act of 1985. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the international professional association of persons involved in the education of exceptional children, including those who are handicapped and those who are gifted and talented. The Association for the Gifted (TAG) is a Division of CEC and is committed to advancing the education of gifted and talented children and youth.

H.R. 3263 would establish a modest federal capacity to address national problems in advancing the education of gifted and talented students. As we will discuss in our statement there is growing concern and interest in improving educational opportunities for gifted and talented children and youth. However, states and localities, colleges and universities, and the private sector are constrained in their ability to proceed effectively because of the lack of trained personnel and the scarcity of ongoing research on effective practices, information, model programs, and procedures for the identification of special populations. This legislation would provide that critical missing link to advancing the education of our nation's most valuable resource.

Number of Gifted and Talented Children

It is estimated that there are 2.5 million gifted and talented students in our nation's elementary and secondary schools. These students require some form of special educational assistance. However less than half of them are receiving any form of special assistance. And for many of those students receiving some help, that help is minimal. In a recent national study of programs for the gifted conducted by the Richardson Foundation of Texas, it was found that when criteria were applied to programs for the gifted to determine whether they were "minimal" or "substantial," significantly less than half of the programs offered met the "substantial" criteria.

While it is generally assumed that gifted and talented students will "make it on their own," studies suggest quite the contrary. Studies have found that approximately 50 percent of gifted children are working at least four grades below the level at which they could be working, and that a significant percentage of high school dropouts are youth with high ability. Imagine a first grader who can read on a fifth grade level and do advanced math who must recite the alphabet and count to 10 with his classmates day in and day out. Under these circumstances you can readily understand why many gifted students underachieve, develop emotional problems, or drop out of school altogether. There are also many poor and/or culturally different gifted and talented students who are not identified by traditional methods such as intelligence or achievement tests. Thus, they are denied the opportunities to develop their talents. This is particularly significant when one considers that 85% of high school dropouts each year are Black, Hispanic, or White economically disadvantaged students.

According to the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, twenty three states now mandate some form of special services to gifted and talented students. State and local expenditures for gifted and talented education have increased over the past decade to approximately \$384 million. While this level of funding may appear to be impressive, it translates into

only \$150 per gifted and talented child. Many states, moreover, spend even less than this amount to meet the special needs of gifted and talented students.

More recently, current state efforts have been augmented somewhat by a growing interest and participation of the private sector in programs for the gifted and talented. From mentor programs - where students work directly with individuals, businesses and government agencies - to direct financial assistance to schools, the private sector is increasingly an important asset.

At the same time, present federal programs appear to be having only minimal impact on assisting in the provision of services to gifted and talented students. States report that about \$10 million dollars of Chapter II of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, P.L. 97-35, is in some fashion assisting in the education of gifted and talented students. States also report that, on the whole, gifted and talented students have not benefited from the Education for Economic Security Act, P.L. 98-377.

#### Who Are Gifted and Talented Children?

Gifted and talented students are, by definition, unique learners and require specially designed programs. As with other exceptional children, the types of programs needed and the extensiveness of the program will vary depending on the student. Gifted and talented students are generally defined as exhibiting high performance or capability in one or more of the following five ability areas: (1) intellectual; (2) creativity; (3) artistic; (4) leadership; and (5) academic.

While many gifted and talented students will excel in a number of these areas, it is important that programs be broadly based enough to accept children with talent in any one of these areas and offer programs to foster their special abilities and talent. An intelligence test may, for example, be one measure of intellectual ability, but if it is the only criterion for eligibility for services, children with outstanding artistic or leadership abilities will not have their talents developed.

Just as there are different types of talents, there are different levels of ability within those talents. Thus, services must be varied to meet children's needs. The Richardson Foundation study found that most schools with a program for gifted and talented students offer only a single program option. The average program provides only two or three hours of enrichment activities per week, with little or no modification in the child's regular school program. The study concluded that comprehensive programming to meet the wide range of gifted and talented students requires the availability of special schools, special classes and enrichment programs, and that students should be able to move in and out of these options as their needs change. As we look at programs for the gifted throughout the nation, we find a wide variety of program options. The problem is that it is very rare to find a community where all these options exist simultaneously.

We also need motivated and skilled teachers in order to have effective programs for the gifted and talented. It is commonly assumed that all teachers want to teach the gifted. This is not true. A recent study in Dade County, Florida found that only 28% of the teachers wanted to teach "creative and intellectually demanding students who call for a special effort." Even when we can find teachers who enjoy the challenge of the gifted child, they rarely receive adequate training to acquire the knowledge and skills they need. Recent estimates suggest that only 20 percent of the current teachers of the gifted have the skills to organize an appropriate curriculum for these children. This is not surprising in light of the fact that only 15 states presently have any specialized certification requirements for teachers of the gifted and talented.

The Council for Exceptional Children and The Association for the Gifted believe that never before in the history of our country has there been more interest in meeting the needs of our gifted and talented students. With the aging of our population and the decline in the number of young Americans, we can no longer afford to waste talent. Children with outstanding potential must be discovered at an early age so their abilities can be nurtured throughout their school years.

We believe that H.R. 3263 is an essential part of realizing the education reforms called for by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In their report, A Nation At Risk, the Commission recommends that:

The Federal Government, in cooperation with states and localities, should help meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, minority and language minority students, and the handicapped. In combination these groups include both national resources and the Nation's youth who are most at risk. (p. 32)

H.R. 3263 wisely focuses limited federal resources on essential areas that states, localities, and the private sector have told us they cannot effectively address. These areas include: (1) personnel development, (2) model programs, (3) technical assistance, and (4) research.

We further support the legislation's emphasis on special populations (i.e., children and youth who are female, limited English speaking, economically disadvantaged, or handicapped), as well as its stress on fostering greater cooperation between the public and private sector in program development.

In conclusion, we hope that the House will approve H.R. 3263, and thus restore a positive tradition in gifted education. In the 1950s and 1970s, when the Congress previously appropriated funds for the education of gifted children, we witnessed significant growth in both state and local programs. During those periods, a modest federal investment resulted in substantial benefits to both gifted and talented youngsters and our nation as a whole. Likewise, H.R. 3263 can provide the basis for stimulating and improving programs in the 1980s and beyond.

We commend Congressman Biaggi for introducing and advocating for this most important piece of legislation and the seventy-four members of the House from both parties who have lent their support as co-sponsors. Furthermore, we thank Chairman Hawkins for scheduling and making this hearing possible. We stand ready to work with the Congress to improve the education of gifted and talented children and youth.

Submitted by:

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4/24/86

## COMMENTS ON H.R. 3243

## THE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH EDUCATION

James J. Gallagher  
 Kenan Professor, School of Education  
 Director, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center  
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Congressman Biaggi and his colleagues are to be congratulated upon the initiative that they are taking through this bill to aid the education of gifted and talented children. Although modest in scope, it carries with it the promise of significant increase in the quality of education of our future leaders, scientists, philosophers, artists, etc. This is greatly needed, since any comparisons across cultures show our best students sadly behind students from other countries in mastery of content fields.

This bill proposes to provide support in several areas that have been sorely neglected in the education of gifted and talented. Although the states, in aggregate, have shown their interest by providing over \$200 million dollars for special education services for these children, that money is often severely restricted in purpose and direction. Very little of this money from the states can be, or is, allocated to research, leadership training, or evaluation to name three critical but missing elements in a total national program.

As a result, the field of gifted education has been starved for creative demonstrations of new strategies or variations to improve education for these children and youth. The state funds support the best of what we now know from the past, but this bill promises to improve our future by stimulating new and better ways.

I believe that the concept of the National Center needs some more explication in the bill or in further report language. If it is to be a consortium of effort, which I would believe to be most appropriate, where would the central office function be housed? Will this be awarded on the basis of competitive bid? I believe that such an intention should be placed in the bill itself. There should be a clear intent to support such a Center for the full five years, since significant work in this field can hardly be accomplished in less than that amount of time.

I would be hesitant to give the Secretary the implied authority to "authorize the director (of the National Center) to carry out such functions as may be agreed upon. . . ." I don't think that administrators subject to political pressures, such as the Secretary, should have any direct input into the programmatic agenda of the Center other than to suggest general priority areas that he/she might see as important.

I believe that the establishment of a specific administrative unit to administer this program within the Department of Education is a critical move and should not be bargained away. Unless there is a specific office that one can go to for information or assistance, with a staff devoted to the purposes of this program, we are not likely to get the leadership necessary from the department for program implementation.

Specifically, I would hope that the number of members of the National Advisory Committee could be increased from five, which seems to be too small a number to cover the various diverse interests and levels of education interested in this topic. An eight- or ten-member committee would seem more appropriate.

While the \$10 million dollar authorization is modest, to say the least for a federal program, it could provide the field a solid shot in the arm in areas of great importance. It would be my hope that once the value of the program became manifest, and the potential benefits visible, that such sums could be sharply increased.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS  
FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

I would like to thank the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor, and the other members of the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee with regard to H.R. 2364, a bill I introduced to address the special needs of gifted and talented students across the Nation.

The federally-supported gifted and talented education program has experienced three distinct junctures in its history: (1) national recognition of the special educational needs of gifted and talented children; (2) development of Federal categorical programs for the education of the gifted and talented; and (3) withdrawal of explicit Federal education support for the gifted and talented. H.R. 2364 would amend the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 to once again establish targeted programs for these individuals. It would reestablish the Office of Gifted and Talented in the Department of Education, and would authorize the Secretary of the Department of Education to begin a modest discretionary grant program which would include demonstration projects.

The special needs of the gifted and talented have been recognized for decades. In 1958, a national conference on academically talented secondary school students, sponsored by the National Education Association, drew national attention to these needs which resulted in a number of recommendations for initiating gifted and talented education programs in the public schools. However, Federal measures to address these needs have been scattered at best, and for the most part, inadequate.

Prior to the 1970's there is no evidence of any continued Federal interest or commitment to the education of gifted and talented children. In 1971, however, Sidney Marland, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, completed a congressionally-mandated study on the status of the education of gifted and talented children in the United States. The report helped to stimulate Federal interest in the 1970's to develop a Federal education program for gifted and talented children culminating in the passage of a separate categorical program authorized under the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978. However, this effort was short-lived and a significant level of Federal funding has never been directed toward the education of gifted and talented children.

In 1981, with the enactment of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (P.L. 97-35), the authorizations of appropriations for the gifted and talented education program, as well as 40 other categorical education programs, were repealed and consolidated into a block grant to State educational agencies. States were then authorized to use the new block grant funds for any of a number of purposes including, but not limited to, the education of gifted and talented children.

Mr. Chairman, gifted and talented students have been a neglected group within our educational system, the diversity of their abilities defy definition. Currently, they are not well served by standard educational programs. Like educationally disadvantaged and handicapped students, if responsibility for their education were left solely to State and local governments, these students would continue to be overlooked for reasons ranging from fiscal constraints to lack of interest. Until there is renewed Federal interest and specified financial support, the condition of education for the gifted and talented will remain inadequate.

The gifted and talented have special educational needs even though many do not recognize or address these needs. The Federal role in financing educational program has generally been to direct resources to special groups of students (i.e. physically and mentally handicapped, financially or underprivileged) who would otherwise be educated under a circumstance where severe disadvantage exists. The Federal role is to enhance the opportunity of these students in a public school setting. We as a Nation are committed to providing the opportunity for a student to develop to the maximum of his/her abilities through a quality education. A gifted child in a regular classroom has no opportunity to develop this maximum ability level.

Someone with a 140 IQ is as different from the average student as someone with a 60 IQ. No one should ever dream of putting either person in a regular class, or at least not without a revised plan of study for that particular student. The Federal government recognizes and authorizes funding to address the special needs of the below average student. Reason dictates that we also address the special needs of the above average student. These students must be allowed to progress at their own rate, regardless of chronological age or grade placement. They need to be valued, challenged and stimulated in an environment that allows children of like ability to learn with and from one another. They must have access to counseling, so they may better understand themselves and make appropriate school and career decisions. And they need a diversity of learning experiences, including instructional methods, materials, activities and higher levels of conceptual complexity. We must provide funding and direction so that all States can identify and address these needs.

In my home State of West Virginia, there were 4410 students enrolled in gifted and talented programs in 1980. This constituted 1.15% of the school age population. These numbers increased to 8751 students in 1985 and 2.41% of the school aged population. State funding for this endeavor has increased from \$225,000 in 1976 to \$5,670,000 in 1985. This is a growing program, however, the funds are limited. It is fortunate for West Virginia's students that our State government recognizes the needs of the gifted and talented and utilizes limited resources to address these needs. However, there are many States that do not address the needs of gifted and talented children.

A 1984 survey by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) revealed the following nation-wide data. Thirty-eight States and the District of Columbia reported that there were 1,022,108 students participating in programs for the gifted and talented. A total of thirty-six States reported that \$196,056,504 of State funds were spent on these programs, and thirty-two States and the District of Columbia reported the use of \$10,419,763 of Chapter II funds for the purpose of gifted and talented programs.

This is a national issue and the numbers are far from insignificant. I believe it is important that we address the needs of the gifted and talented. Therefore, I introduced H.R. 2364 and cosponsored, H.R. 3263, introduced by our respected colleague from New York, Mr. Biaggi. As you may know, Congressman Biaggi has also cosponsored my bill, H.R. 2364. We share a common interest and commitment to this legislative effort, and I look forward to working with the gentleman further on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, gifted and talented children are among our Nation's most valuable resources, the potential leaders in our social, scientific, artistic, and humanitarian development. The Federal government should play a role in financing an appropriate education for these students. The return on this investment to the Nation would come when these students develop their potential and use their abilities to contribute to the continued economic and social development of the Nation, and the capacity of this Nation to respond to future world needs. The appropriate target for limited resources can be determined on the basis not only of the greatest needs, but also of which programs might offer the greatest returns for educational investments. Special attention to the development of gifted and talented students cannot be neglected if we are to improve, or even maintain, our position in an increasingly competitive and technologically sophisticated world economy.

I appreciate your continued efforts in this vein, Mr. Chairman, and commend the willingness of the Education and Labor Committee to address this important issue. I look forward to working with you and the Committee further on behalf of this Nation's gifted and talented students.

Statement by  
William R. Nash, President  
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)  
on H.R. 3263  
the "Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act of 1985"  
for the  
Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education  
of the  
Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives

May 6, 1986

I am making this statement on behalf of more than 6,500 members of our Association. NAGC is a nonprofit organization of parents, school and university teachers and administrators, educational and psychological research personnel, and other citizens devoted to the promotion and improvement of educational programs for gifted and talented children in our public and private schools. We strongly urge speedy enactment of H.R. 3263, introduced by Representative Mario Biaggi on September 11, 1985.

We urge enactment of H.R. 3263 because the programs it would authorize would serve a profound national interest that is being neglected at our peril as a great nation and the guarantor of freedom around the world. We urge enactment because the ability of our schools to identify and provide suitable educational programs for our most gifted young people cannot and will not be significantly enhanced without national leadership that can only be provided by our national government. We urge enactment of H.R. 3263 because it is aimed directly at correcting the major deficiencies in educational resources that today make it impossible for most school systems to respond adequately to the needs of gifted and talented students.

I shall attempt in this brief statement to make very clear the fundamental national interest in the education of gifted and talented children, to explain why these children require special programs and help to achieve their full potential to contribute to our national life, and to convince the Congress that the need for the kinds of limited Federal programs authorized by Mr. Biaggi's bill is urgent and can be met only through action at the Federal level.

But I would be terribly remiss in representing the members and supporters of NAGC if I did not first express our deep appreciation to Mr. Biaggi for introducing H.R. 3263 and vigorously seeking support for it, and our appreciation to the more than 75 Members of the House -- including over half the Members of this Committee and of this Subcommittee -- who have joined Mr. Biaggi as cosponsors. The Members who have provided this extraordinary support come from both political parties and cut across the whole spectrum of ideological, geographical, racial and ethnic, and urban/rural identity and constituencies represented in this great body. The depth and width of this support in the House for Federal action to improve the education of gifted and talented children and youth is the most encouraging development since the enactment of the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act in 1978. We now have high hopes of restoring the essential Federal leadership role provided through that Act, which was repealed in 1981 without the opportunity for a single congressional hearing on that action.

Educators tend to argue over how to define "gifted and talented" and about the percentage of the school population that would qualify under more or less restrictive definitions. But these are matters for State and local determination, and mean little in the absence of effective programs for the gifted student, however defined. The most widely accepted definition is that used by Mr. Biaggi in his bill (section 2 (a) (1)), as "children and youth who give evidence of high performance capabilities in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities". I have emphasized the final clause in the definition for a reason I shall stress.

W. R. Nash, President NAGC, statement on H.R. 3263, page 2

We are talking about children and youth in elementary and secondary schools who have innate intellectual, creative, or leadership qualities and abilities, which, if discovered and developed, will enable them in later life to make outstanding contributions to our society in the arts and sciences, and in every aspect of the economic, social, and political life of our nation that is vital to the success of our highest aspirations.

We are talking about children whose abilities and talents may never be reflected in so-called I.Q. or achievement tests, and who may in fact be regarded as problems and trouble-makers by teachers who have not been trained to recognize and nurture creativity. These children very often are bored to death by schools that offer no challenge, and a significant number may simply drop out. We do not even attempt to identify gifted students in the absence of a special program for them, and even then the means used for identification all too often result in missing disadvantaged, handicapped, or limited-English speaking children (and one of the many strong points of H.R. 3263 is the recognition of this problem).

We are talking about approximately five to ten percent of our elementary and secondary school enrollment, or between 2 million and 4 million public school children, and an additional 300-600,000 private school pupils. The question most often asked is: "Why do we need to do anything special for these kids; aren't they the ones who are going to 'make it' in school without help?" The answer to that question, supported by reams of research and decades of practical experience and observation is a resounding "NO!" Some fortunate few are getting the help they need through effective programs in school; fewer still will somehow realize their potential -- or part of it -- without help; most simply will never develop those innate but unrecognized and un nourished abilities and never make the vital contributions to their own lives and the life of our country and our society that might have been.

We generously and quite rightly provide special help in our schools to others who need it, and with substantial Federal financial aid (which the Blagoff bill does not seek): the disadvantaged, the handicapped, the vocationally oriented, the limited-English speaking, and so forth. Studies financed by the Federal Government and by other public and private entities over a period of years have amply demonstrated the needs of gifted students. The 1958 National Defense Education Act was largely based upon such studies; the Marland Report of 1972 led to funding of Federal programs to strengthen education programs for the gifted and talented and later to the 1978 Act; the 1982 Commission on Excellence specifically recognized these needs and recommended Federal action to help meet them; and a massive study by the Richardson Foundation, just now being published, further documented both the need and our failure to address it adequately. There is neither the space here nor the need to review those studies, further bolstered by congressional committee hearings and reports over a period of thirty years.

It is absolutely necessary, however, to plainly state where we stand in serving the needs of gifted and talented students.

Our public elementary and secondary schools are reaching just over one million students with any sort of program for the gifted -- or something between one-quarter and one-half of the population that should have the advantage of these programs. We don't have comparable private school figures, but there is no reason to assume that they are any better.

That dismal estimate, however, is the good news. The bad news is that most of these programs consist of one or two hours a week of "pull out" classes from regular classes, plus some "enrichment", and are woefully inadequate by any informed measure. June Cox, head of the Pyramid Project at the Gifted Students Institute, and author of the report on the four-year Richardson Foundation study, says that 16 percent of 1,600 schools surveyed in the study actually provide legitimate enrichment activities for gifted students and that 90 percent of the time gifted students remain in a classroom situation that is not serving their needs.

There is a veritable mountain of evidence of the neglect of these young people.

W. R. Nash, President NAGC, statement on H.R. 3263, page 3

- \* Between 40 and 50 percent of gifted and talented children have not even been identified;
- \* Approximately one half of gifted children currently achieve below their grade level academically, which research studies verify and tend to attribute to boredom with classroom work (often repetitive) that holds no challenge for them;
- \* Daniel Barstow, Project Director of "Encendiendo Una Llama" and Chairperson of the National Network for Bilingual Gifted Education estimates that less than 1 percent of "our brightest children who happen to be limited in English proficiency" are participating in any gifted and talented education program;
- \* Less money is spent on programs for the gifted and talented than on any other category of "exceptional children", excepting only the speech-impaired.

Space limitations on these statements does not permit further elaboration, but the scope of our failure in this field is obvious. The consequences are not so easily seen because they are in the realm of futures that will not occur and contributions that will not be made, yet the consequences are real, and they are tragic.

What do we need and what must we do to correct this situation? A report on "The State of the States Gifted and Talented Education" recently prepared for the Council of State Directors of Programs of the Gifted, inventoried needs state-by-state. Some of the most frequently mentioned are those addressed by Mr. Biaggi's bill: leadership and teacher training; curriculum development; inservice training for regular classroom teachers (it may be decades before we have all the special teachers of gifted children we need for special programs); identification techniques and procedures; help in developing differentiated instructional programs to replace special "pullout" classes; and so forth. And there is the ever-present need for better exchange of information and the provision of technical assistance on a national basis.

These are the needs that are addressed by H.R. 3263, and that can only be successfully met by a national effort. No one state or university has the resources to do this job. The resources are extremely limited, in fact, and until such time as they are far more widespread and available only the Federal Government can focus them on the problems in such a manner as to benefit schools and students in all parts of our nation. It need not be a costly effort, and H.R. 3263 carries a very modest authorization of \$10 million in the first year. But it does need to be a sustained and focussed effort over a period of years. Secretary of Education Bennett has proposed using some of the Department's extremely limited discretionary funds for some of the purposes -- mainly teacher training -- embodied in H.R. 3263, and this is a welcome recognition of the necessity of the kind of action we are proposing. But it is limited -- painfully limited -- in scope, and is for one year. Nor would it provide the needed national leadership Mr. Biaggi proposes in restoring a special administrative unit in the Department to manage and coordinate Federal programs for gifted and talented students, and as a source and clearinghouse for information and assistance.

We urgently need enactment of H.R. 3263. We need it now, in this Congress. This would not result, even under Gramm-Rudman Act restraints, as competition for funds with programs such as chapter one for the disadvantaged. It, rather, would complement such programs. The disadvantaged pupil who has special gifts and talents needs this kind of assistance more than any other student. It is not "elitist" to help our most able learners achieve at their full potential, because we recognize that the most able are found in equal numbers among the most disadvantaged. It is elitist to leave such achievement to pure chance, with the advantage to those who come from home and community environments that can in part make up for the deficiencies of our schools. There is nothing more profoundly democratic, or more in keeping with American tradition, than to give every child the best chance we possibly can provide to achieve and perform and contribute to the limit of their highest potential.

As Mr. Biaggi expresses it, let's "Prevent Brain-Drain in our Classrooms". The enactment of his bill is necessary if we intend to stop being, as the Commission on Excellence phrased it, "A Nation at Risk" because of educational deficiencies.



## Gifted Child Society, Inc.

190 ROCK ROAD  
GLEN ROCK, NEW JERSEY 07452  
201/444-6530

May 1, 1986

The Sub-Committee on Elementary, Secondary  
and Vocational Education  
Congress of the United States

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Sub-Committee:

This testimony in support of H.R. 3263 is submitted on behalf of our 3,000 members who speak for 2½ million gifted and talented children nationwide.

In our country of equal opportunity it is taken for granted that all children will have an equal opportunity to learn all they are able to learn. Unfortunately this is not true for gifted children.

Gifted children are children who do things a little earlier, a little better, a little faster, and often a little differently than most other children, translating into learning needs and learning styles which are different from those used in the regular classroom. Current education legislation recognizes the special learning of all children with special needs - except those of gifted children. H.R. 3263 would help State Education Departments, local districts and other public and private agencies meet the special learning needs of these children.

Specially trained teachers are needed to meet the learning needs and styles unique to gifted children. Right now there is not a single course in education of the gifted in our New Jersey colleges and universities. H.R. 3263 would assist institutions of higher education in preparing teachers to challenge gifted students to reach their full potential.

The evolution of our knowledge about giftedness continues but there is now no central information clearinghouse where this new knowledge can be disseminated on a national basis. H.R. 3263 would establish a National Center for Research and Development of Gifted and Talented Children, facilitating sharing of new information nationwide.

Many gifted children are not identified now because their cultural and economic backgrounds may invalidate standardized testing. H.R. 3263 makes identification of these special groups a priority.

There are many myths about gifted children and their education. Five of them are:

1. Most gifted children come from white middle class suburban families.
2. Gifted students are identified by I.Q. tests.
3. Gifted students can challenge themselves because they are so smart.
4. Any good teacher can teach the gifted.

## GIFTED CHILD SOCIETY, INC.

The Sub-Committee on  
Elementary, Secondary and  
Vocational Education

- 2 -

May 1, 1986

5. Most gifted children are fulfilling their potential in school now.

Services under H.R. 3263 would go far toward providing gifted children with appropriate education based on better understanding of their special needs.

The Gifted Child Society is a non-profit parent advocacy group. It has served almost 30,000 gifted children and their families since 1957 through its Saturday Workshops, summer programs and parent education services. Most of these 30,000 children were underachieving in their regular schools. Many of them experienced social-emotional difficulties because their special needs were not recognized or schools were unable to provide appropriate services.

There is an enormous loss to society if our brightest minds are not challenged to solve problems and improve the quality of all our lives.

The writer is the parent of two gifted children. The elder, on being congratulated on graduating from high school, said, "I made it in spite of school."

We implore you most sincerely to pass H.R. 3263 so that in the future our brightest students can reach their full potential.

Most respectfully,

*Gina Ginsberg Riggs*

Gina Ginsberg Riggs  
Executive Director

STATEMENT OF  
THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN  
and  
THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE GIFTED  
to the  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
of the  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
with respect to

THE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT OF 1985  
H.R. 3263

May 6, 1986

Submitted by:

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Council for Exceptional Children and The Association for the Gifted are pleased to have this opportunity to submit the following statement of support for H.R. 3263, the Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Education Act of 1985. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the international professional association of persons involved in the education of exceptional children, including those who are handicapped and those who are gifted and talented. The Association for the Gifted (TAG) is a Division of CEC and is committed to advancing the education of gifted and talented children and youth.

H.R. 3263 would establish a modest federal capacity to address national problems in advancing the education of gifted and talented students. As we will discuss in our statement there is growing concern and interest in improving educational opportunities for gifted and talented children and youth. However, states and localities, colleges and universities, and the private sector are constrained in their ability to proceed effectively because of the lack of trained personnel and the scarcity of ongoing research on effective practices, information, model programs, and procedures for the identification of special populations. This legislation would provide that critical missing link to advancing the education of our nations most valuable resource.

#### Number of Gifted and Talented Children

It is estimated that there are 2.5 million gifted and talented students in

our nation's elementary and secondary schools. These students require some form of special educational assistance. However less than half of them are receiving any form of special assistance. And for many of those students receiving some help, that help is minimal. In a recent national study of programs for the gifted conducted by the Richardson Foundation of Texas, it was found that when criteria were applied to programs for the gifted to determine whether they were "minimal" or "substantial," significantly less than half of the programs offered met the "substantial" criteria.

While it is generally assumed that gifted and talented students will "make it on their own," studies suggest quite the contrary. Studies have found that approximately 50 percent of gifted children are working at least four grades below the level at which they could be working, and that a significant percentage of high school dropouts are youth with high ability. Imagine a first grader who can read on a fifth grade level and do advanced math who must recite the alphabet and count to 10 with his classmates day in and day out. Under these circumstances you can readily understand why many gifted students underachieve, develop emotional problems, or drop out of school altogether. There are also many poor and/or culturally different gifted and talented students who are not identified by traditional methods such as intelligence or achievement tests. Thus, they are denied the opportunities to develop their talents. This is particularly significant when one considers that 85% of high school dropouts each year are Black, Hispanic, or White economically disadvantaged students.

According to the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, twenty three states now mandate some form of special services to gifted and

talented students. State and local expenditures for gifted and talented education have increased over the past decade to approximately \$384 million. While this level of funding may appear to be impressive, it translates into only \$150 per gifted and talented child. Many states, moreover, spend even less than this amount to meet the special needs of gifted and talented students.

More recently, current state efforts have been augmented somewhat by a growing interest and participation of the private sector in programs for the gifted and talented. From mentor programs - where students work directly with individuals, businesses and government agencies - to direct financial assistance to schools, the private sector is increasingly an important asset.

At the same time, present federal programs appear to be having only minimal impact on assisting in the provision of services to gifted and talented students. States report that about \$10 million dollars of Chapter II of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, P.L. 97-35, is in some fashion assisting in the education of gifted and talented students. States also report that, on the whole, gifted and talented students have not benefited from the Education for Economic Security Act, P.L. 98-377.

#### Who Are Gifted and Talented Children?

Gifted and talented students are, by definition, unique learners and require specially designed programs. As with other exceptional children, the types of programs needed and the extensiveness of the program will vary depending

on the student. Gifted and talented students are generally defined as exhibiting high performance or capability in one or more of the following five ability areas: (1) intellectual; (2) creativity; (3) artistic; (4) leadership; and (5) academic.

While many gifted and talented students will excel in a number of these areas, it is important that programs be broadly based enough to accept children with talent in any one of these areas and offer programs to foster their special abilities and talent. An intelligence test may, for example, be one measure of intellectual ability, but if it is the only criterion for eligibility for services, children with outstanding artistic or leadership abilities will not have their talents developed.

Just as there are different types of talents, there are different levels of ability within those talents. Thus, services must be varied to meet children's needs. The Richardson Foundation study found that most schools with a program for gifted and talented students offer only a single program option. The average program provides only two or three hours of enrichment activities per week, with little or no modification in the child's regular school program. The study concluded that comprehensive programming to meet the wide range of gifted and talented students requires the availability of special schools, special classes and enrichment programs, and that students should be able to move in and out of these options as their needs change. As we look at programs for the gifted throughout the nation, we find a wide variety of program options. The problem is that it is very rare to find a community where all these options exist simultaneously.

We also need motivated and skilled teachers in order to have effective programs for the gifted and talented. It is commonly assumed that all teachers want to teach the gifted. This is not true. A recent study in Dade County, Florida found that only 28% of the teachers wanted to teach "creative and intellectually demanding students who call for a special effort." Even when we can find teachers who enjoy the challenge of the gifted child, they rarely receive adequate training to acquire the knowledge and skills they need. Recent estimates suggest that only 20 percent of the current teachers of the gifted have the skills to organize an appropriate curriculum for these children. This is not surprising in light of the fact that only 15 states presently have any specialized certification requirements for teachers of the gifted and talented.

The Council for Exceptional Children and The Association for the Gifted believe that never before in the history of our country has there been more interest in meeting the needs of our gifted and talented students. With the aging of our population and the decline in the number of young Americans, we can no longer afford to waste talent. Children with outstanding potential must be discovered at an early age so their abilities can be nurtured throughout their school years.

We believe that H.R. 3263 is an essential part of realizing the education reforms called for by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In their report, A Nation At Risk, the Commission recommends that:

The Federal Government, in cooperation with states and localities, should help meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, minority and language

minority students, and the handicapped. In combination these groups include both national resources and the Nation's youth who are most at risk. (p. 32)

H.R. 3263 wisely focuses limited federal resources on essential areas that states, localities, and the private sector have told us they cannot effectively address. These areas include: (1) personnel development, (2) model programs, (3) technical assistance, and (4) research.

We further support the legislation's emphasis on special populations (i.e., children and youth who are female, limited English speaking, economically disadvantaged, or handicapped), as well as its stress on fostering greater cooperation between the public and private sector in program development.

In conclusion, we hope that the House will approve H.R. 3263, and thus restore a positive tradition in gifted education. In the 1950s and 1970s, when the Congress previously appropriated funds for the education of gifted children, we witnessed significant growth in both state and local programs. During those periods, a modest federal investment resulted in substantial benefits to both gifted and talented youngsters and our nation as a whole. Likewise, H.R. 3263 can provide the basis for stimulating and improving programs in the 1980s and beyond.

We commend Congressman Stagg for introducing and advocating for this most important piece of legislation and the seventy-four members of the House from both parties who have lent their support as co-sponsors. Furthermore, we thank Chairman Hawkins for scheduling and making this hearing possible. We stand ready to work with the Congress to improve the education of gifted and talented children and youth.

Testimony on Behalf of H.R. 3263, The Gifted and Talented  
Children and Youth Act, by A. Harry Passow

My name is A. Harry Passow, the Jacob H. Schiff Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University in the City of New York. I am the current President of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc., an organization whose membership comes from well over fifty nations around the world. I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) with a membership of more than 7,500 individuals and institutions.

I want to thank Congressman Mario Biaggi for giving me this opportunity to testify on behalf of H.R. 3263, The Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Act.

In 1954, I initiated and for the next twelve years directed the Talented Youth Project of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation at Teachers College, Columbia University. The purpose of the Talented Youth Project was to conduct research and to assist public school systems develop programs aimed at identifying and nurturing gifted and talented children and youth. We initiated the Talented Youth Project because we believed that America was short-changing its gifted children and youth and, in doing so, was short-changing itself as a nation.

Later that year, the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training published a report titled America's Resources of Specialized Talent which asserted that the nation was plagued with shortages of trained manpower, yet was wasting much of its intellectual talent by failing to provide the necessary education which would transform potential into high-level performance. Our nation suffers when we do not recognize talent as a national resource. As the Commission observed: "The nation as a whole profits from the fact that some people possess the ability to design a dam, to plan an automobile production line, to develop high-yield hybrid corn, to compose a symphony, to settle a labor dispute.... Since the whole population profits from the work of its ablest members, it would appear to be good business for the nation to use its brains well, just as it is good business to use well its forests, its water power, and its minerals. It is more than good business; it is a great national concern." [Emphasis added.]

A few years later, the launching of Sputnik in October 1957, caused the United States to reassess its efforts on behalf of its most able children and youth. The passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, initially aimed at strengthening instruction in the areas of mathematics, sciences, and foreign languages, was clearly concerned with insuring that the gifted and talented were identified and provided with an education which would enable them to contribute to the nation's pool of specialized talent.

I began my Reference Paper for the Golden Anniversary White House Conference on Children and Youth (1960) by noting that there was general agreement that: "(1) these critical times call for an ever-increasing number and variety of talented persons--individuals with the endowment, motivation, education, vision, and values to meet the nation's need for trained specialists and leaders; (2) whatever its other functions, the school must give highest priority to the identification and cultivation of each individual's potential to its fullest degree of excellence; (3) uniformity and mediocrity in teaching and learning are intolerable for nourishing individual talents; and (4) the United States has the necessary resources for cultivating the gifted without slighting other students." I also noted that there seemed "to be consensus that 'the gifted have been neglected in our schools' although there are sharp differences as to the nature, the extent, and the causes of

this neglect."

Twenty-six years later, we seem to be in the same position, still trying to come to grips with the notion of identifying, educating, and facilitating the utilization of the talents of individuals capable of creative and superior performance which will enrich humanity. Interest and concern for the education of the gifted have waxed and waned--mostly waned--in the more than a century since the St. Louis superintendent of schools, William T. Harris, initiated a program of accelerated promotion in 1868 to provide for the "rapid learners" in that school system. James J. Gallagher has observed that "A strong case can be made for the presence in the American society of a love-hate relationship with giftedness and talent. On one hand, we revere the gifted individual who has risen from humble background. We are proud to live in a society where talent can triumph over environment or family status. At the same time, since our origins come from battling an aristocratic elite, we are suspicious of attempts to subvert our commitment to egalitarianism. We do not wish a new elite class to develop, and as a result we seem to waver in our attitudes." The issue of elitism vs. egalitarianism has plagued gifted education needlessly.

The congressionally-mandated report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland, Jr., *Education of the Gifted and Talented* (1971) noted that only a fraction of the gifted and talented population was being provided for in our schools, that special educational provisions were necessary to meet the needs of the gifted, that existing federal programs were not available to help meet those needs, and that the gifted and talented were not making it on their own. The Marland Report made a number of recommendations which, together, seemed to provide a basis for a national strategy for the education of the gifted and talented. The establishment of an Office for the Gifted and Talented in the U.S. Office of Education with staff of two or three persons was enough to send a message to state and local education agencies that the federal government had finally recognized the need for providing leadership in our efforts to identify and educate our gifted and talented students. When P.L. 93-380, Section 404, provided an appropriation of \$ 2.56 million for FY1976, an amount approximately equal to one dollar for each gifted student, advocates saw it as a beginning. I am certain that the record will show that this small appropriation paid off in terms of the impact on gifted education far beyond anything that should have been expected. The half-million dollars awarded to local projects and to model projects, together with the \$ 1.5 million allocated to state education agencies, were intended to provide a ripple effect and they did to some extent.

The bill authored by the late Senator Jacob Javits provided \$ 6 million per year for gifted and talented children between 1978 and 1981. In terms of the need, the appropriation was at a bare minimal level, but it was an appropriation and indicated that the Federal government recognized the nation's need for nurturing those with potential for outstanding achievement in socially valuable areas.

When the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, appeared in April 1983, one of the "indicators of risk" which the Commission pointed to was that a large proportion of our gifted students were not performing at a level commensurate with their potential. The report reiterated "the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself." [Emphasis added.] "All children" has historically meant exactly that--all children, including the gifted and talented are entitled to an education which will nurture the development of their talents and potential. The notion that "talent will out" has long been discredited but it persists as long as we fail to recognize, as the Marland Report pointed out, that the gifted and talented need "differ-

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entitled educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society." The bill under consideration will not provide those differentiated educational programs and services but it will provide the necessary stimulus for designing and implementing such programs and services at the state and local district levels. As expressed in A Nation at Risk, "Our goal must be to develop the talents of all to their fullest. Attaining that goal requires that we expect and assist all students to work to the limits of their capabilities" and "to make the most of their talents and abilities" if we are to reverse the "rising tide of mediocrity in our public schools" and in our nation's economic life.

I strongly urge passage of the bill Congressman Mario Biaggi has introduced and which is supported by other members of the House of Representatives. It is a bill that is aimed at establishing "a Federal program to strengthen and improve the capability of State and local educational agencies and private nonprofit schools to identify gifted and talented children and youth and to provide those children with appropriate educational opportunities...." It focuses quite correctly on the Federal government's leadership role in strengthening and improving state and local educational authorities' capabilities by establishing education of the gifted as a national priority. The bill would communicate to educators and citizens alike some important ideas: that gifted and talented children "are a national resource vital to the future of the Nation;" that unless they are provided with adequate and appropriate education, their potential for outstanding achievement is diminished; that the gifted disadvantaged--those gifted from economically disadvantaged and racial and ethnic minority groups--are most likely to suffer further deprivation. The bill is exactly on target by specifying what it is the Federal government can do in its leadership role: "The Federal government can best carry out the limited but essential role of stimulating research and development and personnel training, and providing a national focal point of information and technical assistance, that is necessary..."

The programs which would be authorized by the bill capitalize on what was learned from earlier legislation, especially P.L. 93-380 and the Javits' Gifted and Talented Children's Act. The bill would include funds for pre-service and inservice training for personnel, establishment and operation of model and exemplary programs, strengthening the capability of State educational agencies and institutions of higher education, establishment of a National Center for Research and Development in the Education of Gifted and Talented Children and Youth, support of research and program evaluation. With what is a modest sum of money, the bill would use it for such programs and activities which are most likely to stimulate efforts toward improving our provisions for identifying and educating gifted and talented children. These programs and provisions take place at the local and state levels under our form of government and the activities which would be authorized by this bill are intended to provide a multiplier effect at those levels. Moreover, in mandating that the Secretary of Education give high priority to the identification and education of groups which have been traditionally underrepresented in gifted education programs--"such as the limited-English speaking, economically disadvantaged, handicapped, and women"--the bill calls attention to the fact that these groups constitute the largest reservoir of untapped talent potential the Nation can draw upon.

When gifts and talents go undiscovered and undeveloped, the individual suffers and society suffers. America must end its start-and-stop approach to nurturing excellence and, despite the fact that it calls for a too-modest expenditure, H.R. 3263 represents a significant step towards the fuller development of the potential of our brightest and most creative children and youth. Enactment of this bill would contribute toward realizing America's goal of providing an adequate and appropriate education for all students. We have evidence that education for all children and youth benefits as a result of improving the quality of programs and services provided those we have identified as gifted and talented.



Date: May 2, 1986

To: Hearing Office Record, HR3263

From: Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted

The Washington Association of Educators of Talented and Gifted would like to offer the following data and information as testimony for the Official Hearing Record, HR3263.

Although the history of federal money in the state of Washington for gifted education goes back to grant money obtained in 1957, there was little movement to provide significant programs for the highly capable and talented within our state until the federal money of 1975-1981 was provided. This federal money for gifted education initiated several local district programs. In 1975 we had 21 local programs and by 1980, there were 67 programs. During that time, the state office had either a part-time or a full-time gifted program director. With the federal money and state leadership, inservice training for teachers began, networking developed, teachers received inservice, and resources were expanded; but most of all, the federal money and national activities gave gifted programs credibility and eroded the biases attached to providing differentiated education for the highly capable and talented.

Our organization came into being following that federal funding period. We were a spin-off of not having continuous leadership at the state level and frustration with the lack of networking, resources and training programs. We are evidence that federal money did have an impact because without it, we organized to fill some of the vacuum.

Following little federal commitment after 1981, until 1984, our state funded no new projects. Local districts tried to maintain existing programs at a minimum level. Institutions of higher education did little to develop gifted teacher training programs. Finally in 1984, Washington State enacted enabling legislation that provided approximately \$200 a student for 1% of a school district's population. This incentive did encourage 262 of our 298 local districts to begin implementing some kind of gifted program. Unfortunately "some kind" of a program doesn't necessarily mean the "best kind" of program because of the limited state funding.

Our state lacks the funds to maintain the statewide expansion of gifted education and to provide mandated gifted education programs. Without the impact of federal influence and funding we will lose ground. There is so much yet to be done in gifted education that will provide research data for better identification and ensure program success, an appropriate educational program for our bright young people to help them develop their total capabilities, and the provision of good teacher training and inservice programs.

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Highly capable and talented students need extended educational experiences. Our federal, state and local school districts should be working together to provide programs that meet these students' needs. Therefore, a federal-state-local commitment is necessary to:

- a) promote appropriate teacher training
- b) develop regional leadership training
- c) promote demonstration programs and provide consultants
- d) provide reliable research
- e) promote the development of appropriate resources available through the Clearinghouse
- f) provide information to the public

Activities undertaken with a federal commitment need to be coordinated through each state's office to keep federally initiated programs from vying with each other or overlapping with present state activities. Federal and state gifted education offices working together would provide a comprehensive approach instead of duplicating services.

Please support our need for a federal commitment because it provides a steady influence on our state and local programs, as well as encouraging the development and maintenance of gifted programs and teacher training.

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PLEASE INCLUDE IN THE OFFICIAL HEARING RECORD FOR HR 3263

I am writing to support House Bill 3263, The Gifted and Talented Children Act of 1985, sponsored by Representative Mario Biaggi of New York. The approval of this bill would provide needed funds for local and state agencies to assist gifted and talented children and youth. School district programs, training of teachers and support of parent groups are all critical aspects of gifted education. A National Center for Gifted and Talented Education would help to fill a void at the national level felt since the abolition of the U.S. Office of Education Office of Gifted and Talented.

Is it important to address the needs of gifted and talented youngsters? Won't gifted children make it on their own? Many will. They are those who can get the best our educational system has to offer. We have an obligation to these students to provide the most appropriate kind of program that we can, giving them a chance for academic challenge and interaction with intellectual peers. These programs are particularly important for those gifted students who need some adaptation in their educational experience. Often, these are highly gifted youngsters who do not thrive in the conventional system. They need accommodations in rate of learning, in type of program and in ways of grouping. They need flexible, challenging and differentiated learning experiences. Often, they need counseling services so that they can better

understand themselves, their abilities and their responsibilities to themselves and to society. Some reliable sources claim that 25% of our high school dropouts are in fact gifted children who went unnoticed and whose needs were simply not met. Our society cannot afford the loss of these gifted youngsters. For their sakes and for the sake of society, I urge support of HR 3263. Thank you.

*Joan S. Wolf*  
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Education